

# Reading Revision Lists

Russia “How to” Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction

November 2019

## OBJECTIVE

This guide will teach you how to read an original Russian revision list record.

## INTRODUCTION

Aside from church records, revision lists (*Ревизские Сказки*) are some of the most important records for Russian genealogical research. Like U.S. census records, these records list each member of the family, providing names, ages, and relationships. For this reason, they are essential for establishing family relationships, ages, and tracking a family over time. Although many researchers refer to these records as “Russian censuses,” they are technically not a census – revision lists are taxation records.

In 1718, Tsar Peter the Great instituted a head tax known as the “soul” tax. As a result, beginning in 1719, revision lists, or enumerations of the taxable population, were created to identify taxpayers. There were ten revisions taken sporadically until the final revision in 1858. Because the Russian Empire taxed individuals, all members of the household were listed. Therefore, revision lists are an important source for approximating vital events and identifying family members<sup>1</sup>

You may want to consult the following “How to” Guides before continuing:

- [Reading Russian Documents: The Alphabet](#)
- [Reading Russian Documents: Deciphering the Handwriting and Understanding the Grammar](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph B. Everett, “‘Soul’ Searching in the Russian Censuses of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century,” *FEEFHS*, vol. 5, no. 3-4 (August 1998): 34-42.

## HOW TO

### Grammar

Genitive case, or a grammatical case ending added to words to express belonging, appears often in revision lists. In these records, it is most commonly seen as an ending to the head of household's name (or another male's name) to express belonging and relationships. For example, the Russian name Ivan would be written as Иван in a historical record, but to say that Johann's wife's name was Anna, you would see **Ивана жена Анна**.

The **а** is a genitive case ending expressing belonging. In order to change a male name to genitive case, remove the **ъ** (in some cases there may not be a **ъ**), and add an **а** to the end. See the chart above for more examples. For a more in depth discussion of genitive case, please read [Reading Russian Documents: Deciphering the Handwriting and Understanding the Grammar](#).

English	Nominative	Genitive
Petr	Пётр <b>ъ</b> (ø)	Пётр <b>а</b>
Vladimir	Владимир <b>ъ</b> (ø)	Владимир <b>а</b>
Vasily	Василий	Васили <b>я</b>
Andrei	Андрей	Георг <b>а</b>

### Reading a Revision List

Some revision lists were recorded on a pre-printed form while others were kept in a handwritten format. Regardless of whether it was pre-printed or written by hand, both forms generally follow the same column structure. Revision lists consist of both a left and right-hand page, as illustrated in the image on the following page. Males were recorded on the left while females were recorded on the right. Individual households are divided by a line, as marked by the arrows below.

The image shows two pages of a Russian revision list from 1858, titled "РЕВИЗСКАЯ СКАЗКА". The left page is for males ("Мужеский полъ") and the right page is for females ("Женский полъ"). Both pages have columns for name, age, and marital status. The entries are handwritten in Cyrillic script. Red arrows point to horizontal lines separating individual households.

Семья	Мужеский полъ	Женский полъ
Имя	Возраст	Возраст
19	Иванов Иван Иванович	Иванова Анна
20	Михайлов Михаил Иванович	Михайлова Анна

The information within the columns (or in some cases the columns themselves) were written in Russian cursive. For help reading this script, you may find the following resources useful:

- [Russian Handwriting, FamilySearch Wiki](#)
- [Reading Russian Documents: The Alphabet, Russia "How to" Guides](#)
- [Reading Russian Documents: Deciphering the Handwriting and Understanding the Grammar, Russia "How to" Guides](#)
- [Reading Russian Handwritten Records, FamilySearch Learning Center](#)
- [Russian Alphabet, Language and Handwriting, FamilySearch Learning Center](#)

Keep in mind that you do not need to be a fluent Russian speaker to read a revision list – if you can learn to recognize the letters and understand the column headings, you can read a revision list record!

### Left-Hand Side (Males)

The left-hand side of the page is where males were recorded. The head of household is listed as well as the male members of the household with their ages at the current and previous revisions. Use the image and translation of the columns below to familiarize yourself with the information recorded for males.

РЕВИЗСКАЯ СКАЗКА					
1 1858 году июля 25 дня Мобилевской губернии Молчанского Округа Богородицкой волости Древняя Толовнина					
2 Семья.		3 Мужеский полъ.	4 По последней ревизии состо- яло и послѣ- дней прибыло.	5 Изъ того числа вы- было.	6 Вышло на лицо.
2a № 9 ревиз- ии.	2b № 10 ревиз- ии.	Крестный	4a Лѣта.	5a Когда имен- но.	6a Лѣта.
24.	19.	Ефимовъ - Иванъ - младшій сынъ	44.	показанъ въ 1851.	

Revision List					
<b>1</b> 18.... year .... day [name of gubernia, uyezd and colony]					
<b>2</b> no.		<b>3</b> Male	<b>4</b> How old according to the previous revision and whether they arrived since then	<b>5</b> Which of these are now gone [moved or died]	<b>6</b> Current
<b>2a</b> in previous revision	<b>2b</b> in current revision		<b>4a</b> Ages	<b>5a</b> When exactly [moved or died]	<b>6a</b> Ages

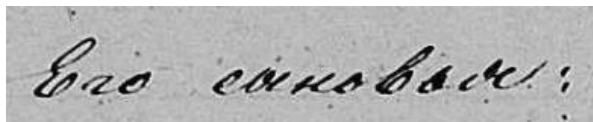
1. Information regarding the date and location of the revision is found here. The date follows a year, month and day format, while the location generally starts from the largest jurisdiction down to the smallest – gubernia/oblast, uyezd/okrug, and colony. These jurisdictions will often be in genitive case. Before transferring the names of the locations into your family tree, be sure to convert the grammatical case endings back to nominative case. For help regarding this, please see [Reading Russian Documents: Deciphering the Handwriting and Understanding the Grammar](#).

The entry reads as follows:

**In Russian:** 1858 года Июля 23 дня Тобльская Губерная, Тюменский Округ Богандинская волость деревня Головина

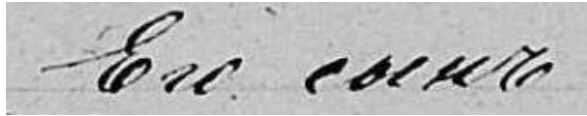
**In English:** 23 July 1858, Tobolsk Gubernia, Tumen Okrug, Bogandinsk Volost, Village of Golovina

2. The second column is the house or family number in the previous revision (2a) and in the current revision (2b). This number reflects the order in which they were enumerated and is not necessarily an address. For this example, in the previous revision, the household was number twenty-four, and in the 1859 (current) revision, it was number nineteen.
3. The names of the male members of the household are found in the third column. The head of household was typically listed first. He will be followed by other members of the household, often sons or other relatives. The following are examples of relationship vocabulary you may find in this column:



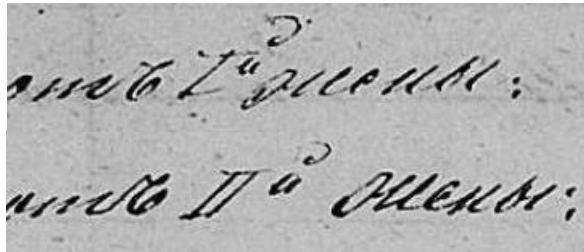
**Его сыновья = His sons**

This will be followed by the names of the head of household's sons. In some cases, the sons may be numbered.



**Его сынъ = His son**

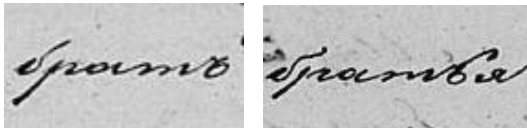
This will be followed by the name of the head of household's son.



**отъ I<sup>й</sup> (первой) жены =  
from first wife**

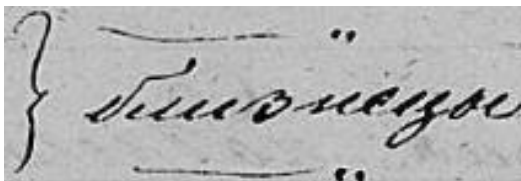
**отъ II<sup>й</sup> (второй) жены =  
from second wife**

If a man had more than one wife, revision lists will often specify which wife the child came from.



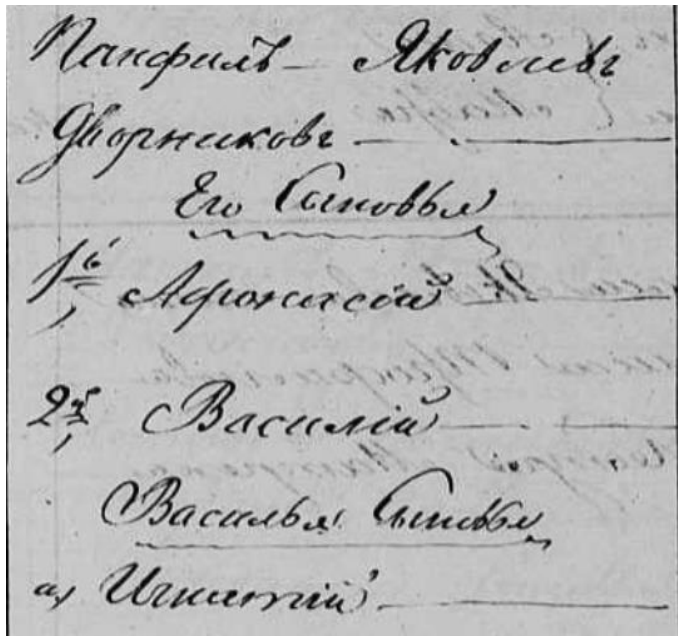
**братъ = brother    братья = brothers**

This will often be preceded by the name of the head of household in genitive case – the genitive case ending shows whom the brother belonged to.



**близницы = twins**

Twins will be grouped together with a bracket and the Russian word for twins. Their ages will be the same.

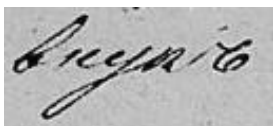


If grandchildren lived with the head of household, the revision list will not typically read "his grandchildren." Instead, grandchildren will be listed as sons of his sons, and slightly indented, as shown in the example below.

In this example, the head of household, Panfil Yakovlev Dvornikov (Панфил Яковлев Дворников) had two sons: Afonasei (Афонасей), and Vasily (Василій).

His son, Vasily had his own child – Ignati (Игнатій), who is indented and listed below his father.





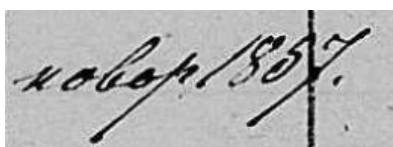
**внук = grandchild**

**внуки = grandchildren**

If the father of the head of household's grandchild was dead or did not live in the household, the word внук (singular) or внуки (plural) will be used for grandchild.

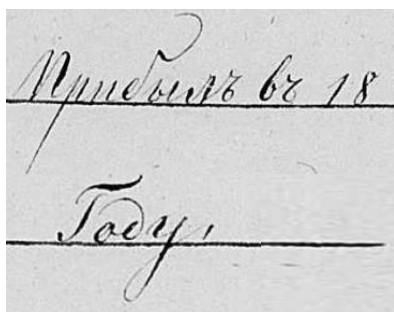
If you find other vocabulary not mentioned in this guide throughout your revision list research, try using the [Russian Genealogical Word List](#) or an online translator/dictionary to find a translation.

4. This column lists the age in the previous revision. If an individual was not recorded in the previous revision, the document will state why. The following are examples of these reasons:



**ново р. (новорождения) = new birth**

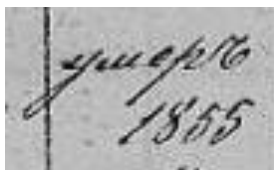
If a child was born in between revisions, the year they were born will listed following this word. Other abbreviations might include: **род.** or **нов.**



**прибыль въ ... = arrived in...**

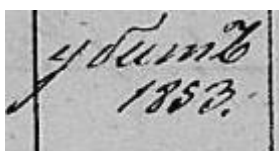
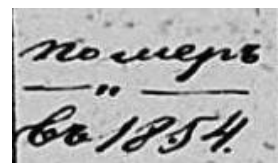
If an individual arrived in the town between revisions, the year they arrived will often be recorded. In some cases, following the word *из* or *от*, the name of the place they lived in before will be listed. You may also find the phrase "перечислен в" (listed in) followed by the name of the village they were previously recorded in.

5. This column lists those who are now "gone," i.e., those who have moved or died. The record will often list when the individual died or where they moved to. The location that they moved to will occasionally be listed. In the example record, no members of the household moved or died in between revisions. The following is a list of vocabulary you might find in this column.



**умеръ = померъ = died**

If an individual died between revisions, the death year will be listed below the word "died"



**убить = killed**

Similar to the word *умеръ*, *убитъ* indicates a death – though one that is untimely. This could be related to an accident, murder, or otherwise untimely death. The year of death will be recorded.

перечислен  
в Миланю  
Борзична

# перечислен в = listed in

If they have moved in between revisions, you may see the words “перечислен в” (listed in) followed by the name of the location they moved to.

- The final column records the age at the current revision, or the age in the year mentioned at the top of the document. This can be used to calculate an approximate birth year.

## Right-Hand Side (Females)

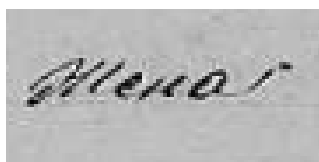
Females were recorded on the right-hand side of the document. A woman’s age at the current revision was listed, however, the age at the previous revision was not recorded. Use the image and translation of the columns below to familiarize yourself with the information recorded for females.

РЕВИЗСКАЯ СКАЗКА				
1 1858 года Июня 25 дня Новоузенск уездной Мологоского Округа Богородицкий Рязо- стна деревня Головини				
2 Семья		3 Женский полъ	4 Во времен- ной отлуч- кѣ.	5 Ныѣ на лицо.
№ 9 реви- зи.	№ 10 реви- зи.	Крестованка		4а Съ котораго времени.
2а 24	2б 19	Ефимов Иванова дочь Не- нина		5а 57.8

Revision List				
<b>1</b> 18.... year .... day [name of gubernia, uyezd and colony]				
<b>2</b> no.		<b>3</b> Female	Whether absent in the meantime [since the <b>4</b> previous revision]	<b>5</b> Current
<b>2a</b> in previous revision	<b>2b</b> in current revision		Since when [have they been absent or <b>4a</b> dead]	<b>5a</b> Ages

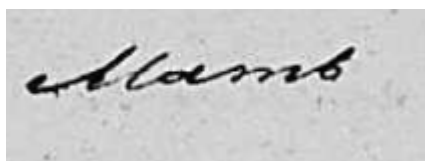
The information recorded in columns one through three on the right-hand side of the document contains the same information as in the male portion of the document, the only exception being different vocabulary and wordings for the relationships found in column number three. On the following page, you will find examples of relationship vocabulary.

It is important to note that genitive case, or a grammatical case ending added to words to express belonging, appears often in this column. For more information regarding genitive case, please see [Reading Russian Documents: Deciphering the Handwriting and Understanding the Grammar](#). Keep in mind that relationships do not always correspond to the head of household, so be sure to pay attention to grammatical case endings, indentations, and the order of entries.



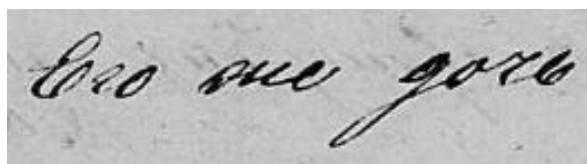
**жена = wife**

This phrase will usually be preceded by the name of the husband in genitive case and followed by the name of the wife in nominative case.



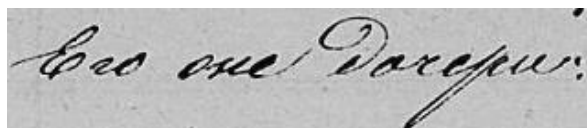
**мать = mother**

This phrase will usually be preceded by the name of the son in genitive case and followed by the name of the mother in nominative case.



**Его же дочь = His daughter**

This will be followed by the name of the daughter. The word *же* may or may not be included. In some instances, the name of the father in genitive case may appear, followed by the word *дочь*, and the name of the daughter in nominative case.

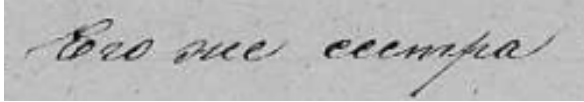


**Его же дочери = His daughters**

This will be followed by the names of the daughters. The word *же* may or may not be



included. In some instances, the name of the father in genitive case may appear, followed by the word *дочери*, and the names of the daughters in nominative case.



**Его же сестра = His sister**

This will be followed by the names the sister (if there are multiple sisters living in the household, the word *сестры* will be used). The word *же* may or may not be included. In some instances, the name of the brother in genitive case may appear, followed by the word *сестра/сестры*, and the name(s) of the sister(s) in nominative case.

The remaining columns (4-5) on the female side of the document correspond to columns 5-6 on the male side. Refer to the instructions above for a description of information found in these columns.